



Family Engagement Framework

TOOLS FOR COMMUNICATING
WITH FAMILIES

EXCERPTED FROM FAMILY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK:
A TOOL FOR CALIFORNIA SCHOOL DISTRICTS

California Department of Education
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Tools for Communicating with Families

Past and emerging national educational policies emphasize the importance of establishing programs to involve families and practices to empower and engage families in the educational process (ED, 2010). Implementing these services means moving away from checklists of discrete activities towards comprehensive family engagement programs that create open communication and strong collaboration among schools, families, teachers, and districts to increase student achievement. A common understanding of the guiding principles, goals, and strategies for family engagement will support effective communication and collaboration.

These Tools for Communicating with Families present the content from the required district activities and implementation rubrics, described in the preceding part of this document, in a simpler, more straight-forward format. The tools may be copied or adapted for use in newsletters, e-mails, and other outreach efforts to families to encourage family engagement and partnering with the district. The information on pages 26 through 31 may be disseminated as single pages, a series, or a five-page document to communicate the *Framework's* family engagement principles to families. The Local Educational Agency (LEA) may add school contact information at the bottom of these pages by hand or with labels prior to copying for distribution.

What Is Family Involvement?

Family involvement is communicating and doing things with your student, your student's teacher, or your student's school to support your student's learning and success. Parents, family members, and other caregivers can be involved in a student's education in many ways.

What you can do at home:

- Talk with your student about homework and offer to help your student understand and learn.
- Talk with your student about the importance of learning.
- Talk with your student about college and careers.
- Help your student organize homework.
- Read notes, announcements, and newsletters from the school.
- Send notes or call the school to communicate with teachers and other school staff.
- Fill out and send back surveys to share your ideas about supporting your student's learning and growth.
- Fill out and send back surveys to share your ideas about parent involvement.
- Ask for and read a copy of your district's parent involvement policy.
- Visit one of the California Parental Information and Resource Center (PIRC) Web sites: California PIRC 1 at <http://www.bilingualeducation.org>; California PIRC 2 at <http://www.calpirc.org>.

What you can do in the classroom:

- Talk with your student's teachers.
- Visit and see what the teachers and students are doing.
- Help with learning activities.
- Attend your student's parent-teacher conferences.

What you can do at the school:

- Attend parent orientation or "Back-to-School Night."
- Visit the parent resource center.
- Talk with the principal about your student.
- Talk with the principal about parent involvement opportunities at the school.
- Attend parent education and information events.
- Attend advisory committee meetings.
- Serve on an advisory committee to provide input on important decisions and spending.
- Help write and review the parent involvement plans.

What you can do at the district office:

- Attend trainings on the curriculum and school budgets.
- Attend advisory committee meetings.
- Serve on an advisory committee to provide input on important decisions and spending.
- Help write and review the parent involvement policy and plans.
- Help plan, design, and provide training for principals and teachers.
- Link the district with other community organizations you know.

For more information, contact:

Family Engagement Activities

SCHOOL INITIATED

FAMILY INITIATED

At the District

- Solicit input from families on district family engagement policies.
- Provide training on curricular and budgetary decision-making for parent coordinators and families.
- Create and support parent centers at school sites.

- Participate on district-level advisory committees.
- Participate in planning and delivery of staff training on parent involvement.
- Participate in development and review of district- and school-level parent involvement plans and policies.

At School

- Create a welcoming environment.
- Celebrate families and the assets they bring to schools.
- Work with families as partners to improve student achievement.
- Assist families to access community resources.

- Attend parent-teacher conferences.
- Visit your child's classroom.
- Volunteer in the classroom (your child's or another classroom).
- Volunteer at lunch or after school to support students.
- Attend or support schoolwide events.
- Visit the parent resource center.
- Attend advisory committee meetings.
- Participate on school-level advisory committees.

At Home

- Promote effective two-way communication with families.
- Assist families to create home conditions to support academic achievement.
- Provide information on expectations, standards, and how families can be involved, in an accessible language and format.
- Keep families informed on student progress and maintain regular communication.

- Provide quiet space at home for homework.
- Limit TV watching and video games.
- Read out loud to your student.
- Talk about school and the importance of learning.
- Respond to school surveys.
- Communicate with teachers about questions or concerns.
- Talk about college and careers.
- Help organize homework.
- Link learning to current events.

Family Engagement Framework: District Principles

With the help of parents, educators and community partners, the California Department of Education (CDE) has developed a *Family Engagement Framework*. The *Framework* is intended to help district, school, family, and community leaders plan activities to involve families in education to support student learning and success. The *Framework* provides principles that describe requirements and activities for districts to support schools in working with families and providing family members with opportunities to actively support their children's education. Here is a summary of the District Principles:

Capacity

- Make sure that all principals understand and implement required and effective parent involvement practices at their schools.
- Put in place family-friendly volunteer policies to build and organize help and support from parents.
- Train parents to successfully participate in decisions about curriculum and budget.
- Find and use resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.
- Make sure staff and family know about and may attend training in effective school, family, and community partnerships.
- Train staff, with the help of parents, in how to reach out to and work with parents as equal partners in the education of their children.
- Make sure that teachers and families know how to help students with homework and other curriculum-related activities.

Leadership

- Make sure that all schools have parent/family involvement programs.
- Meet requirements of state and federal law regarding parent/family involvement.
 - o Make sure parents are on district and school committees.
 - o Put in place district family involvement policies and programs.
- Involve families in advisory groups and training activities.

Resources

- Provide funding and staff to put the parent/family involvement plan into practice.

Progress

- Make sure all schools include parent involvement programs in the school's Single Plan for Student Achievement.
- Supervise and coordinate parent involvement activities across programs.
- Keep a record of progress of each school's parent involvement program.
- Assess the effectiveness of school, family, and community partnerships at each school.

Access and Equity

- Make sure that parent information is provided in ways that are easy to find and read and in languages spoken by families in the district.
- Make sure parents serving on committees reflect the make-up of the student body.
- Make sure schools have ways to communicate from school to home and from home to school on a regular basis.

Search for the *Family Engagement Framework* at <http://www.cde.ca.gov>.

For more information on family and parent involvement opportunities at your school, contact:

Helping the District Increase Family Engagement: What Can You Do?

The California Department of Education's *Family Engagement Framework* (Framework) describes requirements for parent involvement in education and ways that districts may meet those requirements. Are you interested in becoming more involved in the district's family engagement program? Here are some ideas about how you can support the learning and success of your own and other students in the district.

Framework District Principle 1.01: Ensure that all principals understand and implement required and effective parent involvement practices at their schools.

What does the district do?

- Provide principals with information, support, and training about
 - o the role of families in district and school administration and decision-making,
 - o required school plans for parent involvement,
 - o involving families in developing parent involvement and education plans,
 - o required parent community advisory committees.
- Support schools to conduct at least two parent-teacher conferences per year.

What can you do?

- Join training and team building activities with principals and parent leaders.
- Join an advisory group or council that is working to support student achievement.
- Attend your student's parent-teacher conferences; communicate with your student's teacher at other times besides during scheduled conferences.

Framework District Principle 1.02: Establish family-friendly volunteer policies to recruit and organize parent help and support.

What does the district do?

- Provide teachers with written information on how to supervise parent volunteers in classrooms.

What can you do?

- Attend parent training to learn how to work with students in classrooms.

Framework District Principle 1.03: Train parents to successfully participate in curricular and budgetary decision-making.

What does the district do?

- Provide training and resources to parents, especially those serving on advisory committees.

What can you do?

- Participate in training about the work of advisory committees.
- If you are a more experienced parent, help to support and train new parents.

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Framework District Principle 1.04: Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

What does the district do?

- Reach out to community agencies to provide information about education services and to encourage agencies to support education programs.
- Provide parent involvement activities for families with children across education programs and in public preschool.
- Work with parent resource centers (established under Title I, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and High Priority School Grants) to implement parent involvement activities.

What can you do?

- Encourage community organizations and public agencies that you may know to become involved with the district or neighborhood school.
- Start or join a group that brings together schools and community organizations.
- Visit your school and district parent resource centers for information.
- Help out in one of your school or district parent resource centers to support other families. Ask about family resource centers funded under Title I, special education, and High Priority Schools Grants.

Framework District Principle 1.05: Ensure staff and family access to training in effective school, family, and community partnerships.

What does the district do?

- Provide information and support for parent orientation activities at schools.
- Provide information about the Parental Information and Resource Center (PIRC).

What can you do?

- Attend parent orientation (such as “Back-to-School Night”) and read the student handbook.
- Visit a PIRC Web site for more information:
<http://www.calpirc.org>
<http://www.bilingualeducation.org>

Framework District Principle 1.06: Train staff, with the assistance of parents, in how to reach out to and work with parents as equal partners in the education of their children.

What does the district do?

- Provide information, support, and training for staff on parent/family involvement.
- Use parent input to design and deliver staff training on parent involvement.

What can you do?

- Answer and return surveys asking for input about staff training.
- Offer to help design and deliver staff training.
- Join the district parent involvement leadership team.

Framework District Principle 1.07: Ensure that teachers and staff have knowledge and tools to help students with homework and other curriculum-related activities.

What does the district do?

- Provide guidelines for parents visiting classrooms to observe.
- Survey parents to plan activities to help parents support child learning and development.

What can you do?

- Ask for a parent guide for visiting classrooms.
- Answer and return surveys asking for input about help you may need to support your student.
- Attend parent training on how to help with homework.

Providing Leadership for Family Engagement: What Can You Do?

The California Department of Education's *Family Engagement Framework (Framework)* describes requirements for parent involvement in education and ways that districts may meet those requirements. Are you interested in becoming more involved in the district's family engagement program? Here are some ideas about how you can support the learning and success of your own and other students in the district.

Framework District Principle 2.01: Ensure that all schools have family/parent involvement programs.

What does the district do?

- Put a parent involvement policy in place that is approved by the school board, applies to all schools, and includes requirements for Title I schools in the district.

What can you do?

- Review the parent involvement policy; look for information about school-home communication, partnering, and decision-making.
- Start or join a parent involvement leadership team to help the district coordinate parent involvement programs.

Framework District Principle 2.02: Meet requirements of state and federal laws regarding family involvement.

- a. **Ensure parent representation on district and school committees.**
- b. **Establish district family involvement policies and programs.**

What does the district do?

- Have parent members on the following committees:
 - o District English Learners Advisory Committee (DELAC)
 - o Parent Advisory Committee for early childhood programs
 - o Community Advisory Committee for special education programs
- Develop with and send to parents a written parent involvement policy, outlining the district's Title I plan.

What can you do?

- Attend training for parents who serve or would like to serve on advisory groups.
- Join an advisory group.
- Review the district's parent involvement policy when it is sent to you each year.
- Help to review and update the parent involvement policy.

Framework District Principle 2.03: Involve families in advisory bodies and training strategies.

What does the district do?

- Include parents, including DELAC, in decisions about planning and spending funds for parent/ family involvement activities.
- Announce and hold regular meetings for input from parents of English learners.

What can you do?

- Provide public input at advisory committee meetings.
- Become an advisory committee chair or co-chair.
- Join a district personnel development work group or committee.

Framework District Principle 3.01: Allocate resources and assign staff to implement the parent involvement plan.

What does the district do?

- Spend at least 1 percent of Title 1 funds for parent involvement, unless 1 percent of the district allocation is \$5,000 or less.
- Provide other support for parent involvement activities.

What can you do?

- Meet your district parent involvement staff person.
- Answer and return surveys asking for input about support for parent involvement activities.

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For more information on family and parent involvement opportunities at your school, contact:

Effective Family Engagement: What Can You Do?

The California Department of Education's *Family Engagement Framework (Framework)* describes requirements for parent involvement in education and ways that districts may meet those requirements. Are you interested in becoming more involved in the district's family engagement program? Here are some ideas about how you can support the learning and success of your own and other students in the district.

Framework District Principle 4.01: Ensure all schools integrate parent involvement programs into the school's Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA).

What does the district do?

- Ensure the SPSA has been reviewed by and received input from parent and community advisory committees, including the District English Learners Advisory Committee and parents of English learners.

What can you do?

- Review the SPSA.

Framework District Principle 4.02: Provide oversight, support, and coordination of parent involvement activities among district schools and programs.

What does the district do?

- Coordinate parent involvement across programs, including Title I, Head Start/Early Head Start, Even Start, Reading First/Early Reading First, Parents as Teachers, Home Interaction Program for Preschool Youngsters, and State preschools.

What can you do?

- Attend parent involvement events and activities.
- Answer and return surveys asking for input about parent involvement activities.
- Help plan parent involvement events and activities.

Framework District Principle 4.03: Document progress of each school's implementation of its parent involvement program.

What does the district do?

- Collect information to review the parent involvement policy and to identify barriers to participation, especially for diverse parents.
- Survey families to plan more effective strategies and to revise parent involvement policies annually.

What can you do?

- Complete and return evaluation forms and surveys about family involvement activities.

Framework District Principle 4.04: Assess every principal's effectiveness in establishing and maintaining school, family, and community partnerships at their school.**What does the district do?**

- May include family and community engagement in job descriptions, performance planning, and performance evaluation for principals.

What can you do?

- Talk with your student's principal about parent involvement activities.
- Offer to help plan or carry out parent involvement activities at your student's school.

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For more information on family and parent involvement opportunities at your school, contact:

Engaging All Families: What Can You Do?

The California Department of Education's *Family Engagement Framework (Framework)* describes requirements for parent involvement in education and ways that districts may meet those requirements. Are you interested in becoming more involved in the district's family engagement program? Here are some ideas about how you can support the learning and success of your own and other students in the district.

Framework District Principle 5.01: Ensure that critical parent information is readily available in accessible formats and languages spoken by families in the district.

What does the district do?

- Provide parent information to families in their home language and in a timely manner.
- Ask for and use input from the District English Learner Advisory Committee on all written notifications.

What can you do?

- Assist with translation and interpretation.
- Help provide training and information to staff about working with families of English learners.
- Join the district work group on communications.

Framework District Principle 5.02: Ensure that parent representation on committees reflects the composition of the student body.

What does the district do?

- Reach out to and support parents who are economically disadvantaged, have limited English, have disabilities, are migrants, or have children with disabilities to serve on committees.

What can you do?

- Join an advisory committee to represent your family and other families similar to your own.

Framework District Principle 5.03: Ensure that schools have a system in place with multiple strategies to facilitate two-way communication with parents and community members on a regular basis.

What does the district do?

- Schedule parent-teacher conferences across the district.
- Ask for input about special education programs from parents of children receiving special education services.

What can you do?

- Attend your student's parent-teacher conferences.
- Attend advisory committee meetings, information fairs, and public forums.
- Complete and return surveys and evaluations or attend parent input meetings to provide your input on special education programs, if your student receives special education services.

Search for the *Family Engagement Framework* at <http://www.cde.ca.gov>.

For more information on family and parent involvement opportunities at your school, contact: